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ABSTRACT

This booklet presents basic issues and recommendations of a Nevada legislative task force on the establishment of courses in American Sign Language (ASL) for credit as a foreign language in the public schools and institutions of higher education. An introductory section, "American Sign Language and Deaf Culture Issues and Answers: A Basic Guide for Education and Public Service Agency Administrators" compiled by Thomas E. Stewart, describes the report's purpose, characteristics of the deaf community, the nature of ASL, ASL as a language, reasons for conflicting information, and sources of information. The main body of the report presents recommendations of the task force. The issues of cost and implementation at the postsecondary level are specifically addressed. The issues cover: certification/licensure, the nature of public schools and in the university and community college systems, and levels of ASL instruction. Appendixes list the 12 recommendations and summarize results of a survey of ASL for nondeaf students. (CR)

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Report of the Legislative Task Force on American Sign Language To the Members of the 69th Session of the Nevada Legislature



Prepared for the
69th Session of the
Nevada Legislature

November 1996

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American Sign Language and Deaf Culture Issues and Answers

A Basic Guide for Education and Public Service Agency Administrators

American Sign Language



Who are the Deaf?

What information is needed to establish or maintain an effective Deaf Studies or Sign Language Program?

What do you need to know about providing services to the Deaf?

Where can you get such information?

Written and Compiled by James R. Womack
ASL Instructor
Community College Southern Nevada

Purpose

This short publication endeavors to meet the needs of education program and service agency administrators who have or plan to have a program relating to the Deaf and/or American Sign Language (ASL). Administrators lack readily available information that would guide them in understanding basic issues and factors in getting their programs off to the right start and effectively fulfill the goals envisioned for their program. The goal here is to make such information and further sources available. In no way can this booklet present all the issues and questions regarding the Deaf and ASL. However, it will give administrators a beneficial grasp of considerations necessary to avoid pitfalls common to programs that lack the information given here.

Administrators of education programs and service agencies may recognize the advantages and need for innovative training programs in Deaf Studies and/or ASL. How do you deal with the whats, whys, who's, and hows of issues relating to this field? How and where do you get access to informed people? What happens much too often is that someone who knows "sign language" which may not be ASL, or happens to be clinically deaf but is not Culturally Deaf, or is in a profession relating to deafness but unrelated to Deaf Culture or ASL and lacking any degree, experience, or training in this area is called upon to advise, create, manage, and teach in such programs. These inappropriate sources improperly advise and serve administrators and faculty as well as students. Lacking anything better, administrators retain these people and their programs at extreme expense to the Deaf and to students who enroll in these programs. Because students of such programs are incorrectly trained, the Deaf receive inferior services wherever the graduates serve. Students in these programs discover their "sign language" isn't understood by the Deaf because they are not the signs the Deaf use. Students transferring to other programs, have to re-take courses because their course work does not meet the requirements of programs experienced in training professionals to work with the Deaf.

The Deaf - Who Are They?

There are several million people in the United States who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. They include people born with a hearing, people deafened at an early age, and people deafened later in life. Some are deaf due to hereditary reasons, some due to accidental or induced pre-natal or postnatal trauma. Others are deafened by accidents or age. Of this population, approximately 500,000 are "Deaf." The capital "D" refers to deaf people who share a common language (ASL), social norms specific to this group, and a shared cultural experience.



Of the various groups of people with disabilities, the Deaf are the only group that has a language completely distinct from the language of the mainstream society in which they live. Of the various groups of people with disabilities, the Deaf are the only ones who view their disability as an identifying and unifying trait rather than a liability. In short, the Deaf perceive their deafness as a mere extension of themselves as a people. This is not unlike an ethnic group's view of their physical characteristics as extension of themselves as a specific group of people.

The Deaf view of themselves is puzzling for many and contrary to the general social view of Deaf people. Society views the Deaf as a clinical and pathological phenomenon. To this end, social institutions focus on minimizing and hopeful elimination of hearing loss. Educational institutions traditionally focus on speech and audition training which experience shows is generally ineffective. Society's well-meaning efforts are directed toward therapeutic and other pathological centered models. This includes creating largely unsuccessful manually coded English systems designed to teach the Deaf an aural/oral language, English through an optical/manual mode. The Deaf view themselves as a people not in need of fixing, just understanding. These two views have been at odds with one another for centuries and continues to this day.

What Exactly is ASL?

To understand American Sign Language (ASL), you must first understand what it is not. I say this for two reasons. One, is that dictionaries, medical, psychological and other non-Deaf publications that people use to seek a definition offer hearing-centric inaccurate definitions of ASL. Another reason is that so many manually coded English (MCE) sign systems exist that the uninformed assume that any form of systematic hand motions constitutes ASL when in reality it does not.

MCE sign systems were designed for classroom use in hope of teaching English to the Deaf. The majority of the Deaf reject these systems because they are external impositions on a pre-existing culture and awkward to use. They include:

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| 1. Seeing Essential English
(SEE 1) | 2. Seeing Exact English
(SEE 2) | 3. Sign English |
| 4. Morphemic Sign System | 5. Cued Speech
(gestural in nature) | 6. Simultaneous Communication
(sign + speech) |
| 7. Conceptually Accurate
English (C.A.S.E.) | 8. Rochester Method
(fingerspelling only) | 9. Linguistics of Visual English
(L.O.V.E.) |

ASL is none of the above. Indeed, the existence of these pseudo languages may contribute to the general public's confusion about ASL. Many mistakenly think it is a form of broken English or mere English in the form of handshapes and motions. So what is it? **ASL is a hybrid language that is 60%**



WHAT

American Sign Language and 40% French Sign Language (FSL). The French influence is due to Laurent Clerc, a Deaf teacher from France who taught at one of the first schools for the Deaf during the early 1800's. ASL is the language used by approximately 500,000 Deaf people in the United States. It also serves as the communication tool of a significant number of Canadian Deaf people, mostly due the influence of those who attended the world's only Deaf university--Gallaudet

University in Washington D.C. ASL is an optical/manual language that is also spacial as opposed to English which is aural/oral and linear. ASL possesses its own syntax, idioms, grammar, and rules of usage according to social function (formal, casual, ritual, gender based, etc.). It uses space, facial expressions, direction of movement, handshapes, hand positions, and other tools for conveying meaning.

Questions:

1. What is this talk about ASL being a foreign language? It is called "American" Sign Language so what is foreign about it? It is indigenous to the United States.

A score of our colleges and universities offer and accept Native American Languages as foreign languages. You can't get more American than that. Remember ASL is 40% French Sign Language (FSL). Moreover, the Deaf are strangers in their own land shut off from the spoken language of that land. Hence ASL evolved to fill a gap. It is therefore distinct and separate from English. It is so foreign that hearing people including parents and teachers have to struggle to master it to communicate effectively with Deaf children.

2. How can it be a language if it has no written form?

All languages predate their written forms. To claim ASL is not a language due to having no written form is to say all languages were not languages until they had a written form and this is an obviously absurd claim. However, there are on-going efforts to produce a written form for ASL. It is hieroglyphic because ASL has complexities the English alphabet cannot convey. At present, the lack of widespread use is hampered by resistance from the Deaf. This is not unusual, Sequoyah experienced resistance from his people when he produced Cherokee in written form. The Deaf are a young culture still evolving so growing pains are still in evidence. However, that can be said of all human societies.

3. Well, if it's a language, why doesn't it have impact on the international scene as English, French, Spanish, and German do?

There are many languages that do not share the prestigious position of the abovementioned languages in the largely Westernized corporate and international affairs gatherings. Such languages include Native American languages and languages of tribes in the South American jungles just to name a few. However, who among us

would venture to deny those languages are languages simply because they are not used in world business affairs and international gatherings? The interesting thing is that during international Deaf gatherings, ASL is the language of choice. Moreover, in many countries where the Deaf have been suppressed or ignored until recently, the sign language employed as a teaching and communication tool is ASL-based. This is often due to people from these countries going to Gallaudet University and acquiring ASL skills. Or they invite an American Deaf professional to their country to teach them how to teach the Deaf. Naturally, she/he brings ASL along. ASL has global impact within the international Deaf Community. At such gatherings English as a direct means of face to face communication is useless and ignored. Yet we agree that English is a language nonetheless whether or not it is used at these functions. Doesn't ASL deserve the same respect?

People Are Telling Me Different Things

The reason you get so many conflicting kinds of information is two reasons. The first is that you often deal with a non-Deaf source of information. People who are not themselves intimately informed about the Deaf, who aren't part of the Deaf Community (and that can include a person who is deafened, but not Deaf), and professionals who have their own agendas for the deafened people that do not necessarily match the Deaf Community's agenda. Your information in this case is alienated from the very people you hope to serve. Your program will be alienated as well if it is based on this source of information. The second reason you may be confused is because Deaf people aren't all alike:

- a. as individuals - they come from various familial and cultural backgrounds
- b. as students - they come from various educational and clinical backgrounds

Familial and Cultural Impact

The student may or may not have experienced acceptance and inclusion within his/her family and hence exposure to his/her native culture.

Consequently: The deafened person may or may not have a clear sense of self, understanding of social expectations, or self-motivation. Therefore, social awareness and social maturity may or may not be developed.

Educational and Clinical Background Impact

The deafened person may or may not be pre-English or post-English deafened.

(The terms pre-lingually and post linguually deaf is rejected by the deaf as it does not take into account a Deaf children may be born of Deaf signing parents and therefore has a mastered first language that happens to not be English)

Consequently: The deafened person's command of spoken and written English may be nonexistent, superficial, moderate, or superior. Additionally, the deafened person may have anywhere from a minimal hearing loss to a profound hearing loss which affects English acquisition.

Needs and Expectations

The deafened person's needs and goals will vary based on the information mentioned previously.

Consequently: Your experience with individual Deaf people will vary as will your experience with their family members, teachers, interpreters, and advocates.

Perhaps the most unique thing about the Deaf is the very nature of Deaf Culture itself. Deaf people are born primarily to hearing parents. Indeed, ninety percent of the deaf or deafened people are born of hearing parents. What this means for Deaf people is that they physically belong to their parents' ethnic group but culturally belong to the Deaf group. This is unique among culture groups. To understand how this so, one must examine the communicative realities deaf children face. The Deaf person born to hearing parents as opposed to one born to Deaf signing parents, do not normally discover themselves and their place in the world until later ages. As a result, a deaf individual often lacks a clear self-definition because s/he isn't able to relate to with family members and social peers on a daily basis. Since we develop self-perception, based on our direct interaction with others, the deaf child is cut off either entirely or partially from this process. This is mainly true because deafness prevents or severely hinders the natural acquisition of hearing parents' spoken language. Language is the means whereby a society transmits its cultural awareness to its children from generation to generation. Lacking a naturally acquired spoken language, the Deaf have evolved a naturally acquired sign language-ASL. Unfortunately, this language is one that most parents of deaf children do not acquire or master. The result is the Deaf having formed their own culture and language belong to that culture. This doesn't mean mainstream society is rejected. It means the Deaf perceive that culture as one separate from their own. They have no sense of belonging to mainstream culture except in matters of necessity and even then participation is mostly marginal. This reality is accepted matter-of-factly by the Deaf Community. However, it is powerfully rejected and resisted by various groups who purport to advocate or speak in the interest of the deaf. Therefore, people seeking information on how to go about setting up and running a program relating to Deaf services and training people to work with the Deaf receive confusing and conflicting information. Not being sure what to make of it all, administrators often allow whoever seems most informed or is easiest communicate with to proceed as they see fit. This often means people who hold non-Deaf perspectives that conflict with the views and expectations of the very people they claim to represent. These people are then free to do as they please. What they please may not be in the best interests of your institution or the people it strives to serve.



HELP/ASSIST

What Help Is Available?

The Community College Southern Nevada has two degreed and experienced people who can advise you and direct you to sources of additional aid. You can request such help from Sandra Workman or James Womack at:

The Department of International Languages
 Community College Southern Nevada
 3200 East Cheyenne Avenue - N2C
 702-651-4007
 702-651-4301 TTY
 702-643-6427 Fax

Too numerous to include here are the kinds of sources among other aids you can request:

1. How to obtain a national Deaf phone directory
2. Where to order catalogs for books, videotapes, and other media covering various topics relating to the Deaf
3. How to get access to free videotape depository for the Deaf and educational institutions
4. Access to colleges and other educational programs that have Deaf Studies and ASL programs in place
5. How to contact Informed Deaf and hearing professionals and researchers in the field of Deaf Studies and ASL
6. How to contact the National Center on Deafness access in Washington DC and California
7. Where to obtain access to ASL Curriculum developers and ASL and Deaf Culture teaching materials and vendors

8. Information on state and national Deaf organizations
9. Various articles on ASL and the Deaf by the Smithsonian Institute, Discovery and other publications
10. Access to professional organizations that are of, by, and for the Deaf
11. Access to professional organizations that work closely with Deaf organizations
12. Interpreter training and certification information
13. Information of seminars, conferences, and workshops relevant to Deaf Culture and ASL
14. Request presentations on Deaf Culture and ASL at your campus
15. Information on where to obtain assistive devices for the Deaf
16. Where to advertise for prospective ASL and Deaf Culture instructors
17. Where to subscribe for Deaf authored publications, newsletters, periodicals and tabloids

Suggested reading to gain valuable insight on myths and reality about ASL, and outright efforts to kill it by discrediting it a language in and of its own right.

- A. The Mask of Benevolence: Disabling of the Deaf Community, (1992) by Dr. Harlan Lane, Alfred A. Knorp Press
- B. Seeing Voices, (1989) by Dr. Oliver Sacks, University of California Press
- C. And Never the Twain Shall Meet, () by Richard Weinfield,

**Report of the Legislative Task Force on American Sign Language (ASL)
To the Members of the 69th Session of the Nevada Legislature**

This report is submitted in compliance with Assembly Bill No. 366 of the Sixty-Eighth Session of the Nevada Legislature which directed that The Task Force on American Sign Language (ASL) created by the 67th Session be continued to study the feasibility of establishing course work in ASL for credit as a foreign language. The members of the Task Force, appointed by the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Director of Human Resources as specified in Statute, reconvened to carry out the mandates of B.366. The Task Force members and special consultants were:

Ron Malcolm
Coordinator of the Sensory Deficit Programs for
Clark County Schools/President of the Nevada
Association of the Deaf

Cheryl Clark
Coordinator of the Hearing Impaired Programs
for Washoe County

Maureen Fradianni
Representative of the Telecommunications and
Relay Centers

Lisa Laquidra
Representative of Deaf Students

Chris Donohue
President of the Parents Advisory Committee of
Hearing Impaired Children

Kenneth Lange, Executive Director of the
Nevada State Education Association

Theo Byrne
Chair, CCSN, Foreign Language Department

David Sorensen
Nevada Telecommunications Council

Joseph DeFlyer, Chair, WNCC, Foreign
Language Department

Dr. Don Schmiedel
Representative, UNLV, Foreign Language Depart.

Gretchen Greiner
Representative of the Rural Alliance

Gloria Dopf
Representative, Department of Education

Donny Loux
Representative, Division of Rehabilitation

Sandra Workman
Instructor of ASL

James Wornack
Deaf Instructor of ASL

Catherine Black
Sign Interpreters Guild of Nevada

Kim Ryan
Communications Accessing Network

Anita Stockbauer, Director, Disability Resource
Center/University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Diana Callahan, Representative
Nevada Interpreters

Research and coordination of Task Force activities was provided by Elaine Smith, Comprehensive Services Specialist of the Office of Community Based Services. Report editing was provided by Donny Loux, Ron Malcolm, Sandy Workman and members of the ASL Task Force. Production services were provided by Diana Peachay, CBS Program Assistant. All supporting documents are on file at the Office of Community Based Services of the Rehabilitation Division and are available for review.

This report is transmitted to the members of the 69th Session of the Nevada Legislature for their consideration and appropriate action.

Respectfully Submitted,

November 1996

Nevada Task Force on American Sign Language

Summary of Recommendations

I. Introduction/History

The 67th Session of the Nevada State Legislature unanimously enacted Assembly Bill No. 207, directing the appointment of a task force to study the feasibility of establishing course work in ASL for credit as a foreign language. Assemblyman Larry Spitler was the chief sponsor of AB207 which was joined in by Assemblymen Evans, Bennett, Arberry, Humke, Dini, Marvel, Myrna Williams, Tiffany, Heller, Girunchigliani, Perkins, Bache, Lambert, de Braga, Garner, Freeman, Ernaut, Porter, Kenny, Gibbons, Schneider, Neighbors, Carpenter, Augustine, Hettrick, Collins, McGaughey, Regan, Gregory, Scherer, Wendell Williams, Anderson, Haller, Chowning, Segerblom, Petrak, Smith and Toomin. The Bill was passed without opposition in both the House and the Senate.

The mandate to the Task Force was to:

1. Compile and analyze legislation of other states which has served to enact ASL as a foreign language for the purpose of educational credit.
2. Identify the potential effect of course work in ASL on the availability of teachers of and interpreters for deaf Nevadans.
3. Determine the potential effect of course work in ASL in increasing the opportunities for deaf persons for employment, mainstream education and community access.
4. Determine the interest by pupils and students for course work in ASL for educational credit in Nevada.
5. Identify existing curricula on ASL being taught in Nevada's schools and examine related historical trends.
6. Provide recommendations for any necessary legislation related to the establishment of course work for educational credit, including proposals for time schedules and varying levels of participation.
7. Ascertain the costs related to carrying out the various levels of course work recommended by the task force.

The Task Force adopted a total of 12 recommendations addressing the specific issues associated with the recognition of ASL. Those recommendations listed in Appendix A resulted in passage of AB366 recognizing ASL as a fully developed autonomous, natural language with a distinct grammar, syntax and artistic character, and according equal status with other linguistic systems in the public education system of Nevada. Requirements of the legislation are as follows:

1. The state board of education to approve course work and develop policies and procedures for the teaching of ASL in the system of public instruction.
2. A school that chooses to offer ASL as a course will allow any pupil who successfully completes the course to earn credit for completing an elective course in a foreign language or toward completing a required number of credits in a foreign language, if that school has such a requirement.

The legislation reestablished the Task Force created by AB207 and revised its mandate as follows:

1. Ascertain the cost of establishing a course of study in ASL in the secondary and post secondary schools in this state and the University and Community College Systems of Nevada.
2. Make recommendations to the state board of education to assist it in approving a course of study in ASL and developing policies and procedures on the teaching of ASL in the system of public instruction.
3. Make recommendations to the commission on professional standards in education to assist it in determining the qualifications and requirements for obtaining a license or endorsement to teach ASL.
4. Make recommendations to the Board of Regents of the University of Nevada to assist it in approving a course of study in ASL and developing policies and procedures on the teaching of ASL in the University and Community System of Nevada.
5. Monitor and evaluate how the recommendation made pursuant to paragraphs 1-4 were carried out and report on the progress to the 69th session of the Nevada Legislature.

Task Force members reviewed teacher certification requirements and course curriculum and syllabi from sources throughout the nation. Staff conducted a 14 state survey which appears in Appendix B.

II. Issues

Cost

Since the implementation of ASL in the public school systems is not mandatory, each school district will on a volunteer basis review implementation of a program. If the school district opts to implement ASL classes, a teacher, materials, equipment will need to be budgeted. The survey of states indicated that students enjoy taking ASL and find it a practical language which not only enables them to communicate with their deaf peers, but also provides them employment opportunities with advanced skill training as interpreters or provides them an added credential in career choices.

Any college can start a course of study to teach ASL as a foreign language with minimal start-up costs. The initial cost incurred would be a full time position, supplemented with part-time staff if needed and supplies (books, paper). On the community college level, the cost for a full time staff is approximately \$40,000 with benefits. The cost for part-time staff is approximately \$525 per credit hour. Direct cost to the institution would be faculty and supplies. Indirect cost would be the administrative cost for students to use the facility, i.e., using the library and computer labs. An instructor who teaches 5 classes with 20 students per class will carry the cost of the program. The Community College of Southern Nevada started with minimal investment. Students studying ASL now make up the third largest foreign language population at CCSN. At \$36.50 per semester credit, the tuition generated contributes to program cost. CCSN has established a foreign language lab which consists of individual booths equipped with computers, camera and interactive software and linkage to the instructor of which the ASL component cost approximately \$117,000. This lab is an optional feature in teaching ASL. Offering deaf studies is cost-effective, especially in light of the employment opportunities presented graduates. The growth of the CCSN program is verification of the popularity and importance of ASL as a foreign language.

The Community College of Southern Nevada (CCSN) has been offering ASL courses since the early 1980's. ASL started as a continuing education course. In the mid-80's, CCSN offered ASL for a credit. In 1990, the curricula was revised to provide a degree in deaf studies. In 1996, CCSN graduated their first students in deaf studies. CCSN has increased its offering of ASL based upon demand. With the enactment of the Americans With Disabilities Act and the need for businesses and agencies, as well as educational institutions, to provide interpreters to individuals who are deaf, the demand for interpreters has increased. The lack of interpreters in Nevada severely impacts the ability of consumers to do personal business and impacts upon businesses to comply with the Americans With Disabilities Act.

The cost of implementing an ASL Program in secondary and post secondary institutions has more than a bottom-line fiscal component; there are other secondary factors which must be considered.

The following are other cost related issues in the establishment of a course of study in ASL:

- ◆ This Act does not mandate implementation of ASL in either secondary or post secondary institutions. Establishing a course of study is voluntary. However it is anticipated that the demand will drive public and post secondary course offerings.
- ◆ Beyond the scope of the fiscal aspect of offering ASL in secondary and post secondary institutions would be additional returns to consumers. There are approximately 3,767 deaf Nevadans and approximately 114,661 hard of hearing Nevadans. These individuals are severely limited in services. For example, if deaf

or hard of hearing individuals need vocational rehabilitation services, they have access to one counselor in the North and one counselor in the South who can use ASL; deaf family members who may need family or marriage, substance abuse or mental health counseling will find only two mental health counselors in the state who can communicate in ASL; there is one interpreter referral service in Las Vegas and finding qualified interpreters who can assist deaf or hard of hearing Nevadans when they consult with doctors, dentists, lawyers or other professionals or have emergencies is restricted. Most interpreters have full time jobs with school districts and are not available to interpret for deaf individuals or businesses. No interpreter service exists in Northern or rural Nevada. There are no interpreter training programs to graduate or certify interpreters; there are no teacher training programs that specialize in education for the Deaf. Creating an ASL program would be the first logical step to later establishing interpreter training programs, teacher/counselor training programs to work with the Deaf and hard of hearing population. This would increase the number of qualified interpreters and increase the opportunities of Deaf and hard of hearing individuals to access vocational, health care and other service providers. In addition, hearing individuals will have greater opportunities to learn ASL in order to communicate with their Deaf peers.

- ◆ The American With Disabilities Act mandates reasonable accommodation to individuals with disabilities in employment, in business, in telecommunications, in entertainment. As described above, qualified interpreters are extremely difficult to find. Beyond the need of deaf and hearing impaired Nevadans to access doctors, dentists, lawyers and other professional and service providers, individuals who are deaf or hearing impaired who visit Nevada should have access to interpreters. Tourism is one of Nevada's leading industries. Deaf individuals who are employed by the tourism industry or patrons of the hotels, restaurants or casinos are confronted with communication barriers. Businesses like the Mirage and MGM Grand took a proactive approach to resolving the communication problems of their Deaf employees and patrons by offering ASL to their staff, on a limited basis, other businesses must find ways to meet the communication needs of consumers. ASL course offerings will enable greater numbers of employers to train employees in ASL. These employees will enhance the visits of Deaf tourists.
- ◆ Each year Nevada professionals are sent to neighboring states to receive the training that is required to carry out their roles. Often, out-of-state consultants are brought-in to assess and evaluate the educational needs of the Deaf and hard of hearing. By first developing ASL courses then subsequently establishing appropriate programs, i.e., interpreter training, the need for out-of-state training will be reduced and the number of expert ASL trainers to evaluate and certify interpreters and teachers will be increased.

Implementing a Post Secondary Course of Study

- ◆ In spite of sanctioning by Regents, Regents do not control or approve course offerings in the post secondary level. Course of studies and curricula are developed in the Departments.
- ◆ Both the University of Nevada Reno and Las Vegas do not require a foreign language as a prerequisite for college entrance. However, some departments require a foreign language. Acceptance by Admissions and Registration and the Standards for Articulation committee (Curriculum committee and Board of Regents) must be established.
- ◆ Implementing a course of study in ASL, similar to that of (CCSN), in post secondary institutions in Nevada would produce the interpreters, educators, and counselors needed to provide the quality services Deaf and hard of hearing individuals are entitled to receive.

II. Recommendations

Public School System

Certification/Licensure to Teach ASL

Recommendations of the Task Force to the Commission on Professional Standards for certifying and licensing a teacher of ASL:

391.XXX Limited endorsement for teaching American Sign Language (ASL).

1. To receive a limited endorsement as an ASL teacher, a person must hold an ASL Teachers Association (ASLTA) certificate or a level four (4) National Association for the Deaf (NAD) certification or better or a Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf Certified Interpreter/Certified Translator Certificate (RID CITC) or a Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf Certified Deaf Interpreter Certificate (RID CDI); hold a bachelor's degree and have completed 12 semester hours of courses in education including:
 - (a) 6 semester hours of supervised teaching or supervised field experience of no less than 120 hours; and
 - (b) 6 semester hours in methods of teaching elementary or secondary subjects.

391.XXX Endorsement to teach American Sign Language (ASL). To receive an endorsement to teach ASL, a person must hold a teacher's elementary or secondary certificate with a designated major or minor in ASL. The requirement for a major or minor in ASL may be substituted if the individual has one of the following certifications: an ASL Teachers Association (ASLTA) certificate or a level four (4) National Association for the Deaf (NAD) certification or better or a Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf Certified Interpreter/Certified Translator Certificate (RID CITC) or a Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf Certified Deaf Interpreter Certificate (RID CDI).

391.XXX Preparation of student to teach American Sign Language (ASL). A Program for preparing a student to teach ASL must meet the following standards:

1. The program must require that a student:
 - (a) Hold an elementary or secondary license; and
 - (b) Hold an ASL Teachers Association (ASLTA) Certificate or a level four (4) National Association for the Deaf (NAD) certification or better or a Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf Certified Interpreter/Certified Translator Certificate (RID CITC) or a Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf Certified Deaf Interpreter Certificate (RID CDI); and

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- (c) Demonstrate competence in:
 - (1) Understanding the language when expressed at a normal conversational tempo; and
 - (2) Expressing the language with sufficient command of vocabulary, phonology and syntax to carry on fluent conversations.
- 2. The program must require a student to demonstrate competence in the analysis of language, including:
 - (a) Analyzing the phonology, morphology and syntax of the language;
 - (b) Clarifying the differences and similarities between the language and English; and
 - (c) Using the knowledge derived from applied linguistics in studying the language.
- 3. The program must require a student to demonstrate knowledge of the Deaf culture, including:
 - (a) Demonstrate how certain values are associated with certain behavior patterns in his/her culture as well as the Deaf culture;
 - (b) Development of knowledge of major current and historical events and persons of the culture including understanding the importance of Deaf history, literature, humor and folklore and their roles in Deaf culture;
 - (d) Develop a greater understanding of location and geographical signs used in the area in which the ASL class is taught; and
 - (e) Become familiar with the sign systems derived from ASL.
- 4. The program must require a student to demonstrate competence in teaching ASL, including:
 - (a) Conducting classroom activities exclusively in the language;
 - (b) Devising drills and exercises that develop knowledge of the structure of both language and English;
 - (c) Guiding pupils in conversation in the language;
 - (d) Creating situations that cause pupils to use the language.
 - (e) Using a variety of learning situations to teach aspects of the culture; and
 - (f) Developing, encouraging and promoting participation by pupils in activities and events that reflect the contemporary ways of life of the culture.

ASLTA Certificate requires a three-step process which reflects stages of experience, growth and knowledge and skills in teaching ASL. Each step is acceptable to fulfill the ASLTA requirements.

Course of Study

Recommendations of the Task Force to the State Board of Education to assist the Board in approving a course of study in ASL and developing policies and procedures on the teaching of ASL in the system of public instruction:

Learning Outcomes

Course of Study Secondary Education

The Task Force recommends that each course of study in ASL must include instruction designed to demonstrate the following student learning outcomes:

After the 1st Year of Instruction:

Receptive

- ◆ Can comprehend simple statements and questions in standard dialect.
- ◆ Has both general and detailed understanding of short, discrete expressions.
- ◆ Comprehends the main idea of extended but simple messages and conversations.
- ◆ Can require repetition for comprehension even when watching persons who are used to signing with non fluent signers.

Expressive

- ◆ Can express basic personal needs and compose statements, questions, and short messages.
- ◆ Although errors in sign production and grammar can occur, signing can be understood by fluent ASL signers used to dealing with a non fluent ASL signers.

Interactive

- ◆ Can initiate and respond to simple statements and engage in simple face-to-face conversations within the vocabulary and structure appropriate to the communicative situations and functions of this level.
- ◆ Can be understood, with repetitions and rephrasing, by fluent signers used to a non fluent signer attempting to communicate with their language.

Cultural

- ◆ Has knowledge of taught aspects of the Deaf culture and is aware of the existence of cultures other than his/her own.
- ◆ Is able to function in authentic, common, everyday situations but makes cultural errors that impede communication even with ASL fluent signers accustomed to dealing with non fluent ASL signers.
- ◆ Be familiar with important current events and prominent persons in the country of the culture being studied.
- ◆ Be familiar with the location and geographical signs of the area in which the ASL class is taken.

After the 2nd Year of Instruction:

Receptive

- ◆ Can comprehend short conversations in standard dialects based on region, age, and educational differences.
- ◆ Limited vocabulary range necessitates repetitions and/or rephrasing for understanding.
- ◆ Can understand frequently used grammatical features and can utilize word order patterns into simple sentences.
- ◆ Has a basic understanding of longer conversations and messages within familiar communicative situations.
- ◆ Can sustain comprehension through contextual inferences in short communications with fluent signers who are aware of student's lack of fluency.

Expressive

- ◆ Can use intermediate vocabulary and commonly encountered structures.
- ◆ Can express present, future, and past ideas comprehensively.
- ◆ Major errors still occur in expressing more complex thoughts.
- ◆ Begins to develop sequential relationships.
- ◆ Signing is comprehensible to fluent ASL signers used to dealing with non fluent signers.

Interactive

- ◆ Initiate and sustain conversation, but limited vocabulary range necessitates hesitation and paraphrasing.
- ◆ Can use the more common grammatical features but still makes many errors in formation and selection.
- ◆ Can use word order accurately in conversation in more complex patterns.
- ◆ Can sustain coherent structures in short communications.
- ◆ Extended communication is cohesive.
- ◆ Can sign comprehensively but has difficulty producing certain features in certain positions or combinations.
- ◆ Signing can be labored and may need to be repeated to be understood by fluent ASL signers.

Cultural

- ◆ Shows understanding of cultures as systems of values that evolve with time.
- ◆ Able to show how certain values are associated with certain behavior patterns in his/her culture as well as the Deaf culture.
- ◆ Can distinguish some culturally authentic patterns of behavior from idiosyncratic behaviors.
- ◆ May continue to show misunderstandings in applying this knowledge.
- ◆ May miscommunicate.
- ◆ Sometimes with fluent ASL signers not accustomed to non fluent signers.
- ◆ Continue to demonstrate an awareness of important current events and prominent persons in the country of the culture being studied.
- ◆ Continue to demonstrate familiarity with the location and geographical signs of the area in which the ASL class is taken.

After the 3rd Year of Instruction:

Receptive

- ◆ Can comprehend intermediate length conversations in standard dialects based on region, age, and educational differences.
- ◆ Has extended vocabulary range which necessitates fewer repetitions and/or rephrasing for understanding.
- ◆ Continues development of frequently used grammatical features and word order patterns into intermediate sentences.
- ◆ Has an advanced understanding of longer conversations and messages within familiar communicative situations.
- ◆ Can sustain comprehension through contextual inferences in short communications with fluent signers.

Expressive

- ◆ Continues development of advanced vocabulary and commonly encountered structures.
- ◆ Has advanced proficiency in expressing present, future, and past ideas comprehensively.
- ◆ Improves command in expressing more complex thoughts.
- ◆ Continues development of sequential relationships.
- ◆ Demonstrates signing that is comprehensible to fluent ASL signers.

Interactive

- ◆ Continues development in initiating and sustaining conversation.
- ◆ Improves vocabulary range, paraphrasing, and use of the more common grammatical features will produce less errors in formation and selection.
- ◆ Can use word order accurately in conversation in more complex patterns.
- ◆ Can sustain coherent structures in intermediate communications.
- ◆ Demonstrates extended communication which is cohesive.
- ◆ Can sign comprehensively with little or no difficulty.
- ◆ Demonstrates signing which is less labored and less repetitious for comprehension by fluent ASL signers.

Cultural

- ◆ Shows continued understanding of cultures as systems of values that evolve with time.
- ◆ Demonstrates how certain values are associated with certain behavior patterns in his/her culture as well as the Deaf culture.
- ◆ Can distinguish culturally authentic patterns of behavior from idiosyncratic behaviors.
- ◆ Demonstrates advanced ability in applying this knowledge.
- ◆ Demonstrates development of knowledge of major current and historical events and persons of the culture.
- ◆ Develops a greater understanding of location and geographical signs used in the area in which the ASL class is taught.
- ◆ Become familiar with the signs systems derived from ASL.

After the 4th Year of Instruction:

Receptive

- ◆ Can understand a wide variety of registers delivered with little or no repetition and paraphrasing by fluent signers.
- ◆ Can understand most points of discussions or presentations on familiar topics continued development and mastery of more advanced signed communication.

Expressive

- ◆ Can organize presentations on everyday topics and complex ideas with advanced vocabulary to express himself/herself clearly.
- ◆ Demonstrates advanced control of the morphology of the language and of most of the frequently used syntactic structures.
- ◆ Signing in ASL is comprehensible to a fluent signer.

Interactive

- ◆ Can handle most communicative situations with confidence.
- ◆ Continued development towards mastery of complicated or difficult material advanced control of more complex structures.

Cultural

- ◆ Shows understanding of most culturally determined behaviors of the Deaf community.
- ◆ Demonstrates a general appreciation for the Deaf culture.
- ◆ Is generally able to avoid misunderstandings in everyday situations.
- ◆ Is able to use the context to guess at the meaning of some unfamiliar cultural behaviors.
- ◆ Shows initiative and ease in using culturally appropriate behaviors acquired by observation of authentic needs.
- ◆ Development of knowledge of major current and historical events and persons of the culture.
- ◆ Develops a greater understanding of location and geographical signs used in the area in which the ASL class is taught.
- ◆ Become familiar with the signs systems derived from ASL.

Post Secondary Schools

Course of Study

Recommendations of the Task Force to the Board of Regents in approving a course of study in ASL in the University and Community College System:

In order to function effectively as professionals in the field of deafness, individuals must be able to use ASL with near-native competency. The course of study recommended by the Task Force builds upon the secondary ASL framework (p.17) with a higher level of expectations and rigor that is commensurate in higher education.

Level One

Receptive/Expressive

- ◆ The student will demonstrate receptive and expressive mastery of targeted conversational-facilitating behaviors (AGAIN, SLOW, "WHAT," etc.).
- ◆ The student will demonstrate receptive and expressive mastery of targeted conversation regulating behaviors (attention getting devices, turn taking signals, etc.).
- ◆ The student will be exposed to short narratives, stories, etc., in ASL that are told by the teacher and by Deaf users of ASL.
- ◆ The student will demonstrate the ability to initiate, conduct, and terminate a short context-specific conversation with Deaf users of ASL.

Cultural

- ◆ The student will be exposed to the history of ASL, the Deaf community, ASL and its relation to other forms of signing on the diglossic continuum.
- ◆ The student will participate in various social functions in which members of the Deaf community are present.
- ◆ The student will demonstrate readiness for acquiring ASL with emphasis on the eyes and the body.

Level Two

Receptive/Expressive

- ◆ The student will demonstrate receptive competence for short stories, narratives, etc., in ASL that are told by the teacher and Deaf users of ASL.
- ◆ The student will demonstrate the ability to initiate, conduct, and terminate context-specific conversations of medium length with Deaf users of ASL.
- ◆ The student will demonstrate the ability to express self-generated short stories, short narratives, etc., in ASL.

Cultural

- ◆ The student will be exposed to relevant information related to culturally significant topics in the Deaf community.
- ◆ The student will demonstrate knowledge of the Deaf community through research and presentation of specific topics related to Deaf culture.
- ◆ The student will attend social functions at which members of the Deaf community are present.

Level Three

Receptive/Expressive

- ◆ The student will demonstrate the ability to successfully participate in non directed group discussions on student-generated topics.
- ◆ The student will demonstrate the ability to successfully participate in non directed group discussions in interacting with members of the Deaf community.

Cultural

- ◆ The student will be exposed to relevant information related to culturally significant topics in the Deaf community.
- ◆ The student will attend social functions at which members of the Deaf community are present.
- ◆ The student will spend 25% of the course interacting with members of the Deaf community.

IV. Task Force Follow-up

1. Gain acceptance and approval from the Board of Education to implement the course of study to teach ASL in the public school with appropriate policy and procedures.
2. Gain acceptance and approval from the Commission on Professional Standards in Education and follow the procedures to add the licensure/certification regulations into existing policies.
3. Work with school districts to implement the course of study in ASL.
4. Gain acceptance and approval of the Board of Regents to implement a course of study to teach ASL in post secondary institutions with appropriate policies and procedures.
5. Evaluate status of implementation process at both the secondary and post secondary levels to determine if further Task Force involvement is necessary.

APPENDIX A

Appendix A

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE 68TH LEGISLATURE

The ASL Task Force recommended the following:

1. Recognize in statute that American Sign Language is a fully developed, autonomous, natural language with distinct grammar, syntax and art forms.
2. Accord in statute American Sign Language equal status with other linguistic systems in the state's public and higher education system.
3. Provide in statute that a student may count credit received for completion of a course in American Sign Language toward the satisfaction of a foreign language requirement in the public education system under rules made by the State Board of Education.
4. Direct in statute that the Commission on Professional standards in Education, in consultation with the State's school districts and members of the deaf and hard of hearing community through the ASL Task Force, shall prescribe the qualifications for licensing teachers of American Sign Language in the public school system.
5. Direct in statute that the State Board of Regents, in consultation with the state's public institutions of higher education and members of the state's deaf and hard of hearing community through the ASL Task Force, shall develop and implement policies and procedures for offering instruction in American Sign Language in the State's system of higher education consistent with the master plan for higher education.
6. Continue the Task Force on American Sign Language to assist implementation of course work in American Sign Language for foreign language credit by statute:
 - (a) Making recommendations to the State Board of Education to assist in developing and implementing policies and procedures for teaching American Sign Language in the State's public school system.
 - (b) Making recommendations to the Commission on Professional Standards in Education to assist them in determining the qualifications for licensing teachers of American Sign Language in the public school system.
 - (c) Making recommendations to the State Board of Regents to assist them in developing and implementing policies and procedures for offering instruction in American Sign Language in the State's system of higher education.

7. Encourage recruitment of qualified American Sign Language teachers from out-of-state.
8. Encourage course work which would enable interested individuals to complete a Bachelor of Education program with a focus in American Sign Language instruction.
9. Encourage American Sign Language training opportunities for Nevada teachers who are currently certified in other areas.
10. Encourage recruitment of qualified American Sign Language instructors who are deaf.
11. Encourage the consideration of a provisional certification procedure to expedite implementation of American Sign Language course work in the Nevada school system.
12. Continue support of educational programs currently providing Deaf studies programs and instruction in American Sign Language and build from these programs the framework for Nevada's system of ASL studies.

APPENDIX B

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONNAIRE ON
ASL TEACHING CERTIFICATION AND CURRICULA

State	Licensure	Qualifications	Curriculum
AK	None. Want to move to ASLTA.	None. Task Force working on. When instructors hired at University, credentials examined.	None. U of AK uses <u>Learning American Sign Language</u> (Padden and Humphries) for ASL I & II and <u>Vista Signing Naturally</u> for ASL III & IV.
AZ	None. CIT or RID. At U of AZ ASLTA desired.	Varies with each school. Community College--Present credentials + letter of recommendation from person in deaf community. U. of AZ--Ph.D. or advanced grad. student. ASLTA cert. encouraged. S. Phoenix College--degree in ed. or linguistics + 3 yrs. interpreting or teaching or 5 yrs. exp. interpreting or teaching. Exceptions for deaf.	None. U of Phoenix <u>Learning American Sign Language & Signing Naturally</u> . U of AZ uses <u>Signing Naturally</u> . Note: <u>See</u> is used at grade level.
DE	None	None: review credentials. Highly recommend deaf unless child of deaf.	None. DE Technical & Community College uses <u>Signing Naturally</u> . Recommendations incl. heavy on grammar, syntax, vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, deaf culture.

State	Licensure	Qualifications	Curriculum
IL	None	None: Director screens teachers. IL School for Deaf requires teachers to pass level 3 on S.C.P.I. scale.	None.
IN	None	None Law just passed re: ASL in public schools.	Vincennes U. uses <u>Signing Naturally</u>
KS	None: Being studied by Credential Bd. at KS State Bd of Education under Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing.	Training is through KS ASLTA. Educational Interpreters Performance Assessment is used to obtain license. KS Quality Assurance Screening.	None: U offers ASL as foreign language. 2 high schools offer credit toward diploma. Note: <u>SEE</u> used in 3 sections of state but Deaf do not desire.
KY	None. Committee moving toward ASLTA certification.	None	None. Legislation passed in 1992. Commission on Deaf and Hard of Hearing moving on curriculum in public schools then post-secondary.

State	Licensure	Qualifications	Curriculum
ME	None: Some oversight by linguistics specialist. Some moving toward ASLTA. Vista staff may be brought to do training.	None. Must have a state teacher certificate.	None. Baxter School for the Deaf provides 5 public schools ASL thru inter-active TV Network. ASL I-V offered. instructors use <u>ABC in ASL</u> . <u>Signing Naturally</u> is basis for curricula. But overall curricula still being developed. U offers cued speech.
MI	None	None. Must be certified to teach. May hold vocational certificate. Guidelines include: ASLTA certification or demonstration of ASL fluency; documentation of competency skills and methods in teaching; documentation of attendance at workshops and courses related to ASL; willingness to be ASLTA certified; documented experience teaching ASL.	None

State	Licensure	Qualifications	Curriculum
NM	None	Policy ASLTA certification. B.A. or someone who is Deaf or experiences without a degree who is evaluation and has a developed curriculum and lesson plans. If legislative bill approving ASL for credit is approved, the NM Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing would assist in the ASLTA certification process by working with local interpreter training programs to bring to N.M. ASLTA training.	State Dept. of Ed. recognizes <u>Vieta Signing Naturally</u> , but <u>SEE</u> can be taught. If governor signs ASL for language credit, ASL will be taught. <u>SEE</u> will only be tool.
ND	None: school sets policy	None	None
OH	None	None	None. Legislation pertains to elementary and high schools. Post-secondary has option to follow legislation.

State	Licensure	Qualifications	Curriculum
UT	None: A state certification advisory board may be created to interview folks and have them demonstrate their curriculum.	None	None. Instructors make up curriculum. Legislature studying to come up with curricula suggestions.
WA	None	None: State law requires 2 years of ASL classwork prior to teaching ASL. Also recommendations from 2-3 Deaf individuals to be eligible to teach ASL. At University level, person's ability to teach is based upon recommendations from the Deaf community.	None. Up to instructor.